

*Rep. Hall questions safety of chemical dispersant being used to break up oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico*

*Washington, DC* – Hours after Congressman John Hall (NY-19) asked BP America's President whether chemical dispersants BP is using to break up the oil slick in the Gulf of Mexico are safe, the EPA ordered BP to choose a less toxic chemical. The Washington Post reports the EPA ordered the change late Wednesday, following an afternoon hearing by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee at which Congressman Hall questioned BP's use of hundreds of thousands of gallons of chemical dispersants.

Hall asked BP America President Lamar McKay if BP knew whether the dispersants being used are safe to human health. McKay was not able to provide an answer. Hall asked why the specific dispersants were chosen, when there are more effective and less toxic substances available. Again, McKay could not answer.

Hall said these and many more questions remain to be answered. "I want to know if BP's original choice of a dispersant had anything to do with the fact that it was manufactured by a company on whose board sits a former 11-year board member of BP," Hall said.

Last night the EPA told BP officials they had 24 hours to choose a less toxic dispersant and must apply the new dispersant within 72 hours of submitting a list of alternatives, the Washington Post reported.